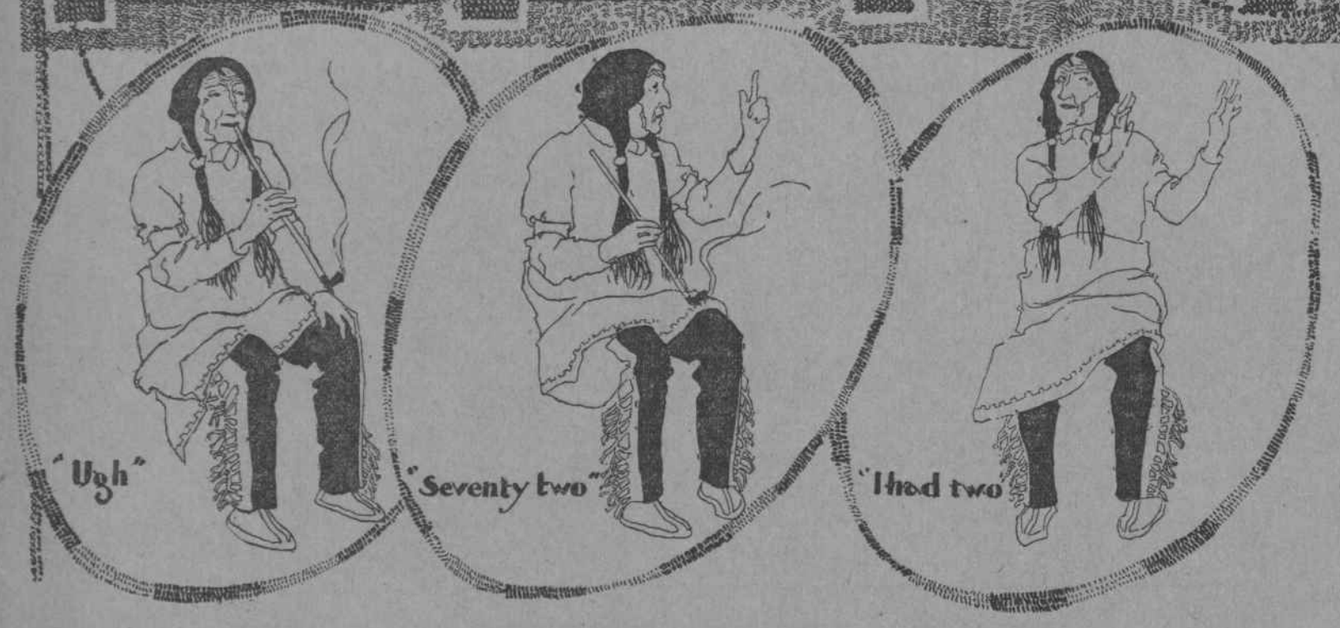
THE SMOOTH MR. "FLAT IRON," INDIAN.



"The White Man Is a Papoose. He Cry for Many Things. When He Get the Things He Cry to Know What to Do with Them."

"White Man Walks Too Fast. He Run All the Time. Indian Run Sometimes When Fighting, When Hunting. Get Tired, Go Home, Eat, Sleep, Sit Still in the Sun."

"Why Do White Men Want So Many Lodges? Do They Sleep in More Than One Tepee at Night? How Many Campfires Can You Eat the Cooking From?"

By WINIFRED BLACK.

A Red-Skinned Citizen from Pine Ridge Gives His Impressions of New York and of Some Things of Human Interest.

Last night I sat in a little wooden box in Brooklyn and talked with a red Indian.

The little wooden box was perched up in a row of such boxes. It was surrounded with a great avalanche of wooden seats. In every seat there was a white man or a white woman.

There were great things to see in the arena in front of the seats.

Cowboys and Cossacks, and Arabian horses, with delicate little heads, and wiry Western ponies, and Mexican lasso-throwers, and men who rode at a gallop while they shot glass balls into atoms, and there was much applause and some shouting, but the red Indian and I sat in the little wooden box and talked of many things.

The red Indian was tall and lean. He wore fringed trousers and moccasins and a red blanket. His hair was long, and it was as black as a raven's wing feather, and as coarse as the mane of a horse. It was braided in two shining braids, with bone disks pinked in, and it hung on either side of his grim face like a garland on a statue.

When the interpreter brought the red Indian into the little wooden box, he sat down opposite me, and threw back his head, and looked at me out of the top of his gleaming hawk's eyes. When he had looked at me until I felt like a very small and very impertinent person, he suddenly relaxed his gaze.

He fumbled in a red cotton bag he carried, and took out a long-stemmed pipe. He fitted the bowl to the stem. He drew a short, sharp line in the air with his thumb and forefinger.

"All right," said the interpreter, and he gave the red Indian a match.

The red Indian lit his pipe. He puffed two or three breaths of blue smoke into the air, then he held out his gnarled, brown hand. "How," he said.

"How," said I.

"Why are you called Flat Iron?"

"Ugh," said the red Indian, "Ogallala"—and the rest was like a northern German in a very gutturl mood.

"He says," says the interpreter, "that the Ogallalas are an old people—the greatest of all the Indian people. He says he was an Ogallalan warrior, but before that he used to file stones and make them flat at the end for arrow heads, and so he was called Flat Stone. The white people like the name Flat Iron best, so they call him that. White people always do what they like best."

"Ask him what the Indians do," said I to the interpreter.

Flat Iron turned his eagle's face to me and narrowed his gleaming old eyes into a beady point of suspicious black.

"Ugh!" he said.

He held his lean, brown hands before his breast and opened and shut them rapidly. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven times he opened and shut his lean, brown hands. Then he held up his thumb and one finger.

"Seventy-two," said the interpreter. "He says he is seventy-two years old. For forty years he has seen the Indians do as white men told them to do."

"And before that?"

The old Indian smiled. It was not a very pleasant smile. It made one think of tomahawks.

He leaned over and took me by the sleeve.

"He wants to know," said the interpreter, "why white women make false arms. Do they think the arms the Great Spirit gave them are too small?"

"Tell him," said I, "that there is a great medicine woman who tells us to wear them. Some day, when we are good, we will have our real arms back again."

"He says," said the interpreter gravely, "that the medicine woman speaks badly. She makes women wear false sleeves and ride the thing that whirls, and it is not good. Women must not be like men."

"Have you a wife?" said I to the red Indian.

"One," said the old Indian, with his brown forefinger. Then he told me that the Ogallalas always married sisters. "I had two," he said, "but they made too much noise in the tepee, so one of them is gone away.

"My squaw is in Pine Ridge. She wants to come with show. No, no; I keep my squaw at home. Pine Ridge is many days from this place. It is in the great plain. High, high on the great plain. Me come on the spitting horse—Choo-Choo—has ah—hoot, hoot—quick, quick, quick as the wind in the cloud—the high plain—the great mountain." The brown arm crept up the up grade—"down, down, down"—the brown hand swept down the mountain—"hoot, ho-ot—hoot—the rivers"—the warm hand quivered like the water—"the level prairie"—the brown hand flattened itself through the air. "Hough, Hough, Hough," he panted through a tunnel, his lean arms spread the Hudson out like a map, "Hough, Hough"—the tunnel again—"clang, clang"—the depot—and New York. Pine Ridge was many days away.

"I walk up the big paths of the city," said the red Indian. "How do they build the big tepee? What for? One lodge is big enough for big Indian. Why do the white men want many lodges? Do they sleep in more than one tepee in one night? Do they sit in more than one council chamber at the same time? How many campfires can you eat the cooking from?

"The white man is a papoose. He cry for many things. When he get the things he cry to know what to do with them. White man talks too fast. He run all time. Indian run sometimes. Run when fighting, when hunting, get tired, go home, eat, sleep, sit still in the sun.

"White man run, run, run all time. What for?

"What he find to run?"

All these things the red Indian said in a rapid guttural, with strange gestures that accorded oddly with his impassive face, and the interpreter said them again to me in a strange, mechanical voice that was somehow like the voice which speaks from a phonograph.

A man in the tier behind us strangled in a sudden fit of coughing.

He coughed so spasmodically that many people turned to look at him.

The red Indian sat like a statue.

When the man had coughed himself too weak to move, the Indian said:

"He has the barking sickness. It is not good—the barking sickness. It grows in the walls of the big wooden tepees. Indian tepee has not the barking sickness. See"——

He took a wrinkled paper from the folds of his blanket.

"Big white man. The talking paper, says big man, big chief. Not good."

I looked at the paper, and it had a picture in strong outline of Corbett and Fitzsimmons doubling up their fists at each other across the page.

"It is not good," said the Indian. "Why do they talk in the talking paper. When I was a young man I fought; I killed. I do not do so." He doubled up his fist in a cynical exaggeration of the pictured fists.

"I do so."

He grasped an imaginary head, and twirled his hand in a quick, clutching circle. He threw out his hand, with the fingers open palm downward. "Dead," he said—"Indian way."

There was a new stir in the arena.

A stage conch came along, and behind it bounded a horde of yelling Indians.

"My pappoose," said Flat Iron, pointing with the stem of his pipe. "Two—big Injun."

"When you were a boy," said I, "did you see stage coaches like that?"

"No," said the Indian. "The first time I saw a white man man they rode in wagons with tepees on them—big, white tepees. They crossed the Platte River. I went with my father and other Indians to see the white man in the tepee with the whirling feet.

"We lay in the grass all night. There were squaws and pappoose in the moving tepees. When the sun rose, the tepees fell into the river, and all the white people were dead. I do not know why they died in the water. But in a few moons more tepees come, on the whirling feet, and they came many times, and we did not go into the tall grass to watch for them at sunrise."

"I was a big Indian when I saw the gun. I did not like to hear it speak at first. I am an old man. I have seen many things. I have seen the Ogallalas in the wars. I have seen young men and warriors dancing the dance of war. I have seen the great prairie black with buffalo. I have killed the deer and the buffalo for my meat. Now I have seen the great water and the spitting horse, and the white men come and look at me and say who is he? And I remember the days of my youth, and it is not good. I am going to see the Great Father at Washington and tell him that it is not good. The Indian is a good Indian. He will learn fast—only not too fast. He will die to learn too fast. The tepees of wood will kill him. The planting and the working with the planting will kill him. He will learn the way of the white man, but not too fast. It is not good."

"If you could teach the white men the Indian way, would that be good?"

The red Indian's hawk eyes lit with a strange gleam.

"Ugh!" he said.

"How would you begin?"

He swept the great avalanche of white people before and behind and beside him with a look like the look of a starved wolf. Then he looked at me, and his face grew as meaningless as the face of a wooden statue.

"It is not good to talk like a woman," he said.

"If you could have anything you wished for," said a man who sat in the box with us, "anything in the world, what would you choose if you could make your wish come true? To be young? To be back in the prairie black with buffalo? To be"——

The red Indian gave the man a quick look, and then he took his thumb and his second finger and joined them together till they made a round O. Then he held out his lean, brown hand to the man in the box. The interpreter grew very red.

"What does he say?"

"He says," said the interpreter, grinning apologetically, "he says $1, that's what he said."

"But the youth and the buffalo and the great hunts and the victorious wars"——

The red Indian took his pipe out of his mouth. He blew a curl of smoke into the air. As it rose, soft and blue and wreath-like he touched my arm and pointed to it. Then he threw up his hand, palm outward.

"Gone," he said.

And he folded his blanket around him and stalked out of the box.

But the round silver dollar was safe in the folds of his blanket.

WINIFRED BLACK.

"My squaw is in Pine Ridge. She wants to come with show. No, no; I keep my squaw at home."

AERIAL SHIPS OF WAR FOR THE EUROPEAN POWERS.

Build aerial war ships is the latest cry of the European military experts. Increase the army, double the navy, but don't neglect the air ships.

It now appears certain that in the next war in which two or more of the great military powers are engaged the conflict will be carried on to some extent in the air. The aerial operations will not be confined to the use of balloons, but flying machines will be employed. Thus a new and terribly hazardous element will be introduced into the complex science of war.

The German and French military authorities are known to be experimenting with air ships, but the experiments are kept profoundly secret. British officers are clamoring that the Government should devote its attention to the building of aerial war vessels. They place their faith largely in the inventive genius of Hiram Maxim, the American who lives in England.

Captain Baden-Powell, of the British army, who distinguished himself in the recent conquest of Ashantee, writes an interesting and startling article on the subject of aerial warfare to the United Service Magazine.

Other nations, he says, are experimenting with flying machines, and even now there is at least a chance that the French may possess a flying machine capable of carrying and dropping explosive shells, for M. [illegible] and others have sufficiently demonstrated that the conquest of the air is a matter of the near future.

"What will the good citizens of London say when they see a hostile dynamite-carrying aerostat hovering over St. Paul's? Our naval supremacy would be comparatively useless if we had no aerial force. It therefore becomes not only desirable for us to have aerial machines for offence, but it becomes necessary for us to possess them for defence against hostile attack through the air, and the speediest and handiest machine will win the day. If some foreign nation should one day produce such an engine of war it is no certainty that we should be able at once to imitate it and follow suit."

If any really efficient machine should be invented, then, says Captain Baden-Powell, England ought to purchase the secret at any cost. During strained relations with another Power, "if one nation was able to dispatch three or four machines to hover in midair over the capital of the other, would not this be likely to have some influence in preventing an actual war? It might appear a somewhat arrogant act, but what could be done to retaliate?"

Again, "if the nations were actually at war, that nation which had organized an aerial navy would possess such an incalculable advantage that without the slightest doubt the poor 'landlubbers' would receive the most crushing defeat before they had time to think of defence or counter-attacks.

"Within a few hours of the declaration of war some aero-motives could be dispatched, high out of range of guns, and perhaps travelling at such a speed as to ensure safety from projectiles, over the enemy's country. From them explosive shells could be dropped where and when the aeronauts willed. By this means not only could fortifications be damaged, magazines be blown up, ships sunk, and towns attacked, but also railways and telegraphic communication could be interrupted, bridges and tunnels rendered useless, troops on the march dispersed, guns and stores destroyed, and, in short, all attempts to carry on war utterly disorganized. Would it not, then, seem madness to attempt a war against a nation possessing even a few such machines if we ourselves had none?"

So real and imminent does the writer think this danger that he demands precautionary measures should be taken at once:

"It may be possible to protect to some extent our fortifications by means of sloping bomb-proof roofs over the more vulnerable portions. Our ships must be fitted with horizontal armor. Guns must be made capable of firing upward; during the siege of Paris the Germans had a number of guns specially made on swivel mountings for firing at balloons, though it is also true that very few of them were hit during the siege. Rockets might perhaps prove more useful.

"But the only efficient means of defence will, undoubtedly, be for us to be equal with, if not superior to, our enemies in aerial armaments. We must encourage inventors all we can, and a few thousands well spent would be sure to produce an aeromotive nearly as good as our opponent's. Some years ago a very large sum of money (£111,000) was given by the Government for the secret of a torpedo. I, for one, feel convinced that if that sum had been utilized for experimenting with aerial machines we should now be in possession of an engine of war at least as powerful as that torpedo, and very possibly of infinitely more value.

"A nation possessing a few efficient aeromotives could, especially if occupying an insular position, almost do without any army or even navy, and thus an immense expenditure would be saved."

It need hardly be added that the perfection and adoption of aeromotives will mean an immense addition to the present ruinous expenditures of the military powers.

The huge air ship built by Hiram Maxim in England, to which this writer refers, is the most elaborate creation of the kind ever attempted. It is stored in a large building by itself, has its own line of railroad tracks running up a hill for a couple of miles to enable it to get a start, and has cost altogether over $100,000. This monster did actually fly, with two men upon it. It rose one foot from the track, being kept from going further by rails put there for that purpose, and was so injured that it has not yet been repaired.